

BLOOMFIELD CITIZEN.

A Day's March with Sherman's Army.

Captain Daniel A. Oakley, of the Second Massachusetts Regiment, contributes an article to *The Century* for October, rehearsing the part taken by Sherman's Twentieth Corps in the Campaign of Georgia and the Carolinas. The following incidents are from his account of the march dating from the occupation of Columbia:

As the route of our column lay west of Columbia, I saw nothing of the oft described and much discussed burning of that city.

During the hasty removal of the Union prisoners from Columbia two Massachusetts officers managed to make their escape. Exhausted and almost naked, they found their way to my command. My mess begged for the privilege of caring for one of them. We gave him a mule to ride with a comfortable saddle, and scraped together an outfit for him, although our clothes were in the last stages. Our guest found the mess luxurious, as he sat down with us at the edge of a rubber blanket spread upon the ground for a tablecloth, and set with tin cups and platters. Stewed fighting-cock and bits of fried turkey were followed by fried corn meal and sorghum. Then came our coffee and pipes, and we lay down by a roaring fire of pine-knots, to hear our guests story of life in a rebel prison. Before daybreak the tramp of horses reminded us that our foragers were allying forth. The red light from the countless camp-fires melted away as the dawn stole over the horizon, casting its wonderful gradations of light and color over the masses of sleeping soldiers, while the smoke from burning pine-knots befogged the chilly morning air. Then the bugles broke the impressive stillness, and the roll of drums was heard on all sides. Soon the scene was alive with blue coats and the hubbub of roll calling, cooking, and running for water to the nearest stream. The surgeons looked to the sick and foot-sore, and weeded from the ambulances those who no longer needed to ride.

It was not uncommon to hear shots at the head of the column. The foragers would come tumbling back, and ride alongside the regiment, adding to the noisy talk their account of what they had seen, and dividing among their comrades such things as they had managed to bring away in their narrow escape from capture. A staff-officer would gallop down the roadside like a man who had forgotten something which must be recovered in a hurry. At the sound of the colonel's ringing voice, silence was instant and absolute. Sabers flashed in their scabbards, the men brought their guns to the "carry," and the battalion swung into line at the roadside; cats, fighting-cock, and frying pans passed to the rear rank; officers and sergeants buzzed round their companies to see that the guns were loaded and the men ready for action. The color sergeant loosened the water-proof cover of the battle flag, a battery of artillery flew past on its way to the front, following the returning staff-officer, and we soon heard the familiar bang of shells. Perhaps it did not amount to much after all, and we were soon swinging into "route step" again.

At times when suffering from thirst it was hard to resist the temptation of crystal swamp water, as it rippled along the side of a causeway, a tempting sight for the weary and unwary. In spite of oft-repeated cautions, some contrived to drink it, but these were on their backs with malarial disease at the end of the campaign, if not sooner. After passing Columbia there was a brief season of famine. The foragers worked hard but found nothing. They made amends, however, in a day or two, bringing in their familiar corn-meal, sweet potatoes and bacon.

We marched into Cheraw with music and with colors flying. Stacking arms in the main street, we proceeded to supper, while the engineers laid the pontoons across the Pedee River. The railing of the town pump, and the remains of a buggy, said to belong to Mr. Lincoln's brother-in-law, Dr. Todd, were quickly reduced to kindling wood to boil the coffee. The necessary destruction of property was quickly accomplished, and on we went. A mile from the Lumber River the country, already flooded ankle-deep, was rendered still more inhospitable by a steady down-pour of rain. The bridges had been partly destroyed by the enemy, and partly swept away by the flood. An attempt to carry heavy army wagons and artillery across this dreary lake might have seemed rather fool-hardy, but we went to work without loss of time. The engineers were promptly floated out to the river, to direct the rebuilding of bridges, and woods all along the line of each column soon rang with the noise of axes. Trees quickly became logs, and were brought to the submerged roadway. No matter if logs disappeared in the floating mud; thousands more were coming from all sides. So layer upon layer, the work went bravely on. Soon the artillery and wagons were jolting over our wooden causeway.

As my regiment was the rear guard for the day, we had various offices to perform for the train, and it was midnight before we saw the last wagon over the bridge by the light of our pine torches. It seemed as if that last wagon was never to be got over. It came bouncing and bumping along, its six mules smoking and blowing in the black, misty air. The teamster, mounted on one of the wheelers, guided his team with a single rein and addressed each mule by name, reminding the animal of his faults, and accusing him of having among other peculiarities "a black military heart." Every sentence of his oath-adjured rhetoric was punctuated with a dexterous whip-lash. At last, drenched to the skin and covered with mud, I took my position on the bridge, seated in a chair which one of my men had presented to me, and waited for the command to "close up."

An Odd Millionaire.

JOHN I. BLAIR OF BLAIRSTOWN.

He is one of the oddest characters in the country. He is already beyond the regular three-score and ten, but looks after his ten or more millions as vigorously as he used to manage his dollars when he was a poor but thrifty youngster in Warren county, N. J. He made his own start in life, and got his first taste of wealth from some railroad building in Warren county. The bulk of his fortune, however, he gained in building roads in Iowa. His general scheme was to get up a company to build a road through new territory. Then he got the people along the line to chip in enough to pay all the expenses of building the road, the work being done by a construction company, which was in another form. Bonds were issued for this, and stock equal in amount to the bonds was issued to his company, which was also himself. The building up of the country by the road made the stock valuable and John I. Blair rich. At one time he owned more miles of railroad than any man in the country, Vanderbilt not excepted. He built the town of Blairstown, where he lives in a solidly magnificent place. It is a thriving village, some distance from anywhere in New Jersey. To get to it and away from it he built the Blairstown Railroad, the chief business of which is to carry John I. Blair back and forth. He is the hero of innumerable quaint anecdotes. A son lives in fine style at Belvidere, N. J. Once a friend, seeing the son drive a gorgeous equipage that cost the old man's modest carriage into the shade, remarked on the difference.

"Well, you see," said the millionaire dryly, "I never had the advantage of a rich father."

Once out West some of his men were arrested, and when he wanted to go bail for them the Judge, not impressed by his rather rough exterior, insisted on some evidence of his reliability as a bondsman. The old man trotted out a few hundred thousand dollars' worth of Government bonds that he had handy, and offered to produce several millions of good railroad bonds if he was given a few hours more notice.

Once he ran on the Republican ticket for Governor of New Jersey. The agreement was that he was to furnish the money and the politicians the experience. He was not elected, and at the end of the campaign he had the experience and the politicians had a big heap of the money. It was then that he told his famous anecdote of the western man who drove a lot of hogs from St. Louis, where hogs were low, to Chicago, where they were high, and finding that before he got there the hog market had twisted around so that swine were higher in St. Louis than in Chicago, drove the hogs back again, getting to St. Louis just in time to strike a depression in the St. Louis hog market, which was matched by an elevation at Chicago. The man said he was the only man that he had made much money out of it, but he had had the society of the hogs.

"Well, I'm like that fellow," said Blair. "I haven't been elected Governor, but I've had the society of the hogs."

Blair has dabbled in politics some since then, but his experience was not lost. His contributions to campaign funds have never exceeded generosity. He was a delegate from New Jersey to the convention that nominated Blaine, and on the way out he kept a whole car load of young politicians up all night by telling them funny stories. In the morning he was the freshest and heartiest man in the car.

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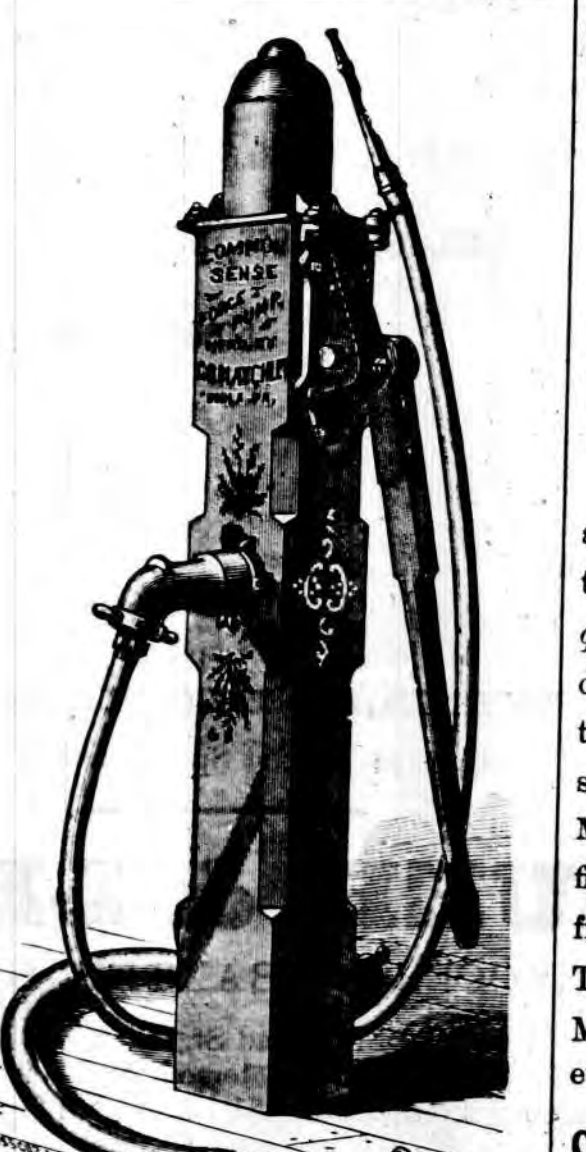
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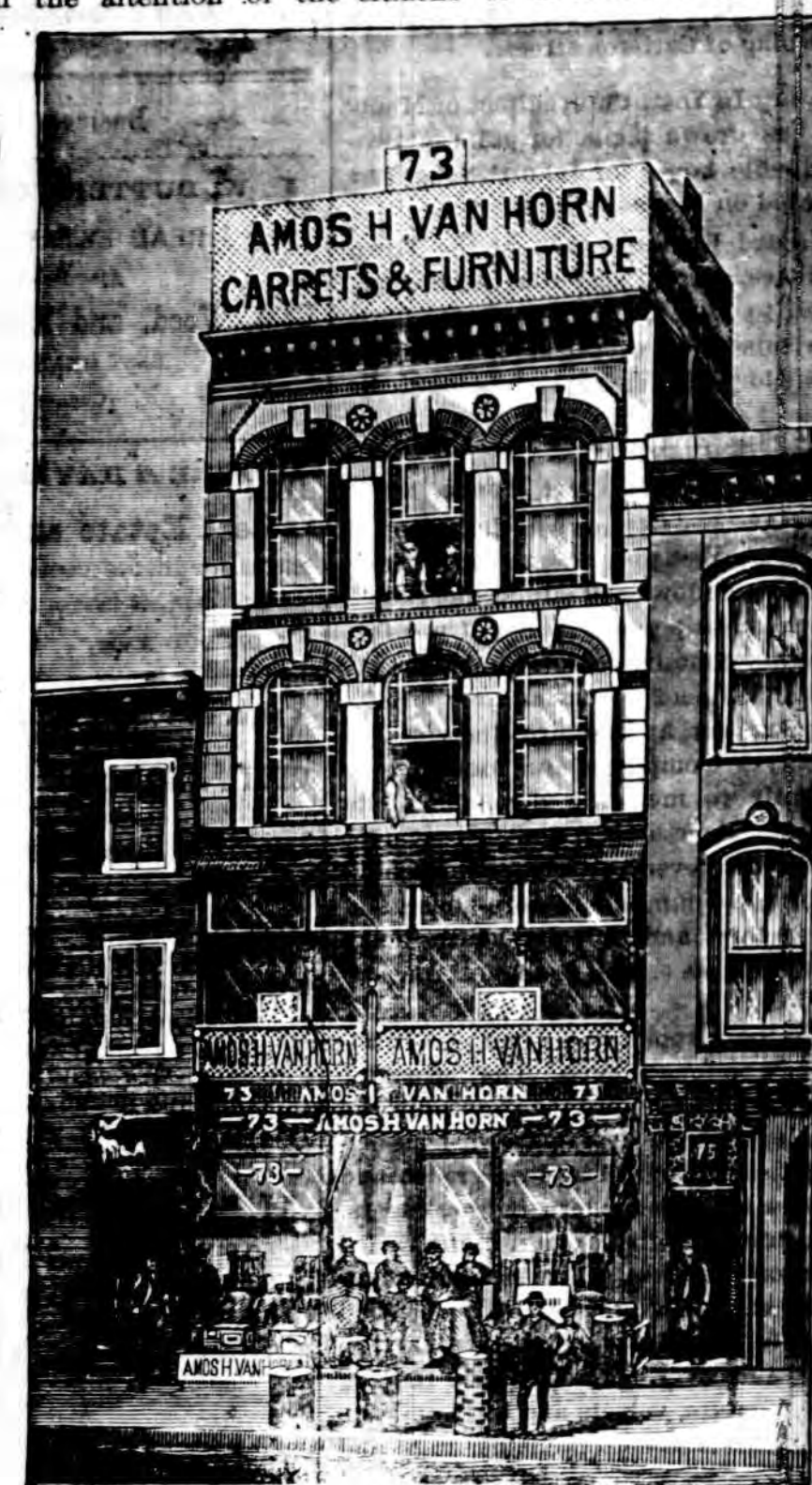
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